

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3824
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.03.2026

STAGGERING NUMBERS OF ONLINE CHILD ABUSE

3824. SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) Government's action Following the Children Rights Network identifying 73000+ online child sexual abuse cases in the January-September (2025) period, indicating alarming scale;
- (b) breakdown of the cases into: age groups targeted, platforms where abuse occurred, prosecutions initiated, convictions secured, children rescued and rehabilitated;
- (c) whether the IT Rules 2021 requiring intermediaries removing child sexual abuse material within 24 hours enforced or whether platforms delaying compliance.
- (d) measures ensuring encryption doesn't shield offenders while protecting privacy; and
- (e) whether dedicated fast-track courts established for online child abuse cases with specialized prosecutors, judges trained in digital evidence?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) and (b): Data of offences related to children is maintained by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). It can be accessed at: <https://www.ncrb.gov.in/crime-in-india.html>

(c) and (d): The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 provides for safeguarding children against sexual offences including online sexual abuse:

- i. Section 12 punishes sexual harassment of a child as defined in section 11, including through electronic or online means, such as making sexually coloured remarks, showing pornographic material, or repeatedly contacting a child with sexual intent.
- ii. Section 13 criminalises the use of a child in any form of media, whether electronic, printed, or broadcast, or the purpose of sexual gratification.
- iii. Section 14 prescribes punishment of imprisonment for not less than five years and a fine for the first offence. For subsequent convictions, the punishment increases to imprisonment for not less than seven years and a fine.

- iv. Section 15 lays out a graded punishment system for possessing, storing, or failing to report pornographic material involving children.

Information Technology Act, 2000 and IT Rules, 2021 together create a stringent framework to deal with online sexual offences against children. Sections 67, 67A, 67B of the Act provide punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene or sexually explicit content. It also empowers police to investigate offences (section 78), enter public place and search and arrest suspected person (section 80).

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 further strengthens the legal framework to address offences of online child sexual abuse. Section 294 criminalises sale, distribution, public exhibition or circulation of obscene material, including in electronic form, while Section 295 specifically prohibits sale, distribution or exhibition of obscene material to children.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has also issued guidelines and awareness materials on online child abuse, including *Being Safe Online, Guidelines on Cyber Safety for Schools* as part of *Manual for Safety and Security of Children in Schools*, and the *Child Victims of Cyber Crime – Legal Toolkit*.

Under Rule 3(2)(b) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (“IT Rules, 2021”), the intermediary shall, within 2 hours from the receipt of a complaint made by an individual or any person on his behalf under this sub-rule, in relation to any content which is *prima facie* in the nature of any material which exposes the private area of such individual, shows such individual in full or partial nudity or shows or depicts such individual in any sexual act or conduct, or is in the nature of impersonation in an electronic form, including artificially morphed images of such individual, take all reasonable and practicable measures to remove or disable access to such content which is hosted, stored, published or transmitted by it.

The Central Government has strengthened safeguards under the IT Rules, 2021 through amendments that came into force on 20th February, 2026. These amendments address risks arising from synthetically generated information (deepfakes), including child sexual exploitative and abuse material (CSEAM), non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII), and other obscene or privacy-invasive content, including misrepresentation of identity or events. Further, the timeline for removal of such content under Rule 3(2)(b) has been reduced from 24 hours to 2 hours to enable faster and more effective action by intermediaries.

The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 provides for protection of personal data, including that of children, while permitting processing in accordance with law and enabling lawful access for authorised Government agencies for enforcement purposes.

(e): Department of Justice is implementing the Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) Scheme since 2019 for setting up Fast Track Special Courts including exclusive POCSO Courts for expeditious trial and disposal of rape and child sexual abuse under the POCSO Act, 2012. As on 31.12.2025, there are 774 functional FTSCs including 398 e-POCSO courts. Since the inception of this Scheme, 235723 child abuse cases have been disposed of by the e-POCSO courts.
